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REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Foundations and Nature of Verse. By CARY F. JACOB, M.S., PH.D. New York: Columbia University Press, 1918. Pp. ix+231.

The Measures of the Poets. A New System of English Prosody. By M. A. BAYFIELD, M.A. Cambridge: The University Press, 1919. Pp. vii+112.

Dr. Jacob's book is an attempt at a synthesis of the results of scientific (chiefly physical and psychological) investigations into the nature of the various elements which appear in verse. After a Foreword and an Introduction, the author discusses in a series of chapters such basic physical subjects as "Pitch," "Tone Quality," "Intensity," "Time," "Rhythm." Having laid this foundation, he considers "the types of phenomena which enter into the formation of temporal rhythm" (p. 101) in order to determine which of them is significant for meter. The first of these types of phenomena is duration; from experiments in which duration is isolated, it has been shown that our impressions of time are very inexact. "We accept as equal time intervals which are unequal (sometimes by almost as much as fifty per cent)" (p. 104). If this is so "when duration and duration alone is involved and when attention is doing its best to make accurate judgments, the amount of aberration attendant upon judgment when not only variety of pitch, of tone-color, and of intensity, but also intellectual content are present to complicate matters must be seen at once to be extreme" (p. 105). "The so-called short vowels require just as much time for their pronunciation as is required by the so-called long vowels" (p. 116). Therefore such theories as those of Sidney Lanier and Professor Saintsbury lack any scientific confirmation. Next the author considers accent, in which changes of pitch, loudness, and time figure. Here he uses a term "centroid syllable" devised by Wallin and defined as "an impression which arouses the sense of hearing to a certain pitch of intensity for a certain length of time" (p. 126). The problem to be studied is whether there is regularity of time intervals between centroids, and the conclusion is negative. In this chapter appear some scansions, which are (in the opinion of one reader at least) wild and horrendous, e.g.:

Tō further | this | Ä | chitōpél ũ | nites | [p. 139]

Yēt | ónce móre | ' Ó yē | Láurēls, and | ónce móre | [p. 140]

Can it be that such schemes have a meaning? In this chapter Dr. Jacob concludes that neither the time intervals between accents nor the number of accents in the line "differentiates prose from verse or verse from music." In succeeding chapters he studies "The Phrase" and "Rhyme and the Line" with the conclusion that none of these is sufficient to distinguish verse from prose. In the second of those chapters the author expresses surprising views as to the line: he believes that the writing of verse in lines is a perfectly arbitrary matter, and that verse is essentially verse whether it be written in lines of a determined length or written continuously just as in the case of prose! The evidence he gives—the scribe's method of writing Old English verse without separation into lines, writing out a passage from Shakspeare (starting with a point *inside* a line) and asking a person to arrange it as verse, and Poe's experience with a single poem—is too trivial to be worth answering. Indeed, his opinion on lines is inconsistent with his own emphasis on the importance of the phrase.

At this point, perhaps, it is as well to state that Dr. Jacob's style is by no means clear—at least to a simple philologist. Much of what he says seems to have little definite meaning or is really ambiguous. (It should be added that in many cases the investigators whom he quotes express themselves even less clearly than he does.) Thus, it may be that he does not mean what he seems to say about the line, or in this statement about kinds of feet: "I can not believe that there is any essential difference between the various kinds of feet" (p. 178). If this means what it says, one wonders how such a view is reconciled with the fact that we have in English a vast body of verse which can be analyzed most simply as iambic in movement, cannot be treated as trochaic except by those who are willing to call trochaic a line which regularly begins with anacrusis, and is regularly truncated at the end; that the body of trochaic verse is relatively small, and that for most subject-matters at least readers and poets alike prefer the former movement to the latter. After having shown that such elements as duration, accent, phrase, rhyme, and line do not "characterize verse," Dr. Jacob begins on page 178 to consider the elements that do distinguish verse. In this section of his book he is least clear; though one can see what his opinions are, one cannot see how he arrives at them. The fact seems to be that the results of all the scientific study have been negative, and hence do not afford a basis for a constructive theory. Therefore throughout this part of his study Dr. Jacob is compelled to reach his positive conclusions much as does the ordinary metrist. Thus, though scientific investigation shows that the time lengths of syllables and pauses, when considered separately or in combination, are not sufficiently regular to arouse an impression of rhythm, Dr. Jacob thinks that when the attention is not occupied specifically with making these measurements, the regularity is sufficient to aid in the establishment of a general feeling of rhythm (p. 185). Likewise, though there is not equality of time length between accents, still there is a regularity of recurrence of

accent. "Of the phenomena of verse, accent is the most prominent. In both verse and music it furnishes for the ear the most convenient standard of measurement" (p. 186). The book concludes with chapters on "The Content of the Phrase," "The Rhythm of Prose," and "Scansion," and a Summary. The last is significant in that it shows that the result produced, on Dr. Jacob's mind at least, by the large amount of scientific experiment is a series of opinions which differ practically not at all from the views of such metrists as Lewis and Alden.

The value of the book to anyone interested in the structure of verse is great because it furnishes a quick method of becoming acquainted with the results of scientific investigation and affords a check to the more subjective methods of most books on prosody.

Mr. Bayfield's book is the production of a classical scholar, who evidently does not believe it necessary to inform himself on the discussions of the prosody of a modern language before writing on it. In an introduction he admits that he had not heard of Lanier's *The Science of English Verse* when he wrote this book. As he never refers to Omond, Bridges, or Mayor (to cite only English authorities), it is presumable that he knows nothing of their views. The chief contention of his book—that English verse should be scanned generally as trochaic rather than as iambic—he apparently considers a discovery of his own, but of course it was presented long ago by Lanier, and more systematically developed by William Thomson in *The Basis of English Rhythm* (1904). Mr. Bayfield's general treatment and scansions are by no means so convincing as those of his two predecessors. Finally, Mr. Bayfield includes information about various Greek feet—ionic and galliambic—and lyric measures (p. 24). If he finds in a line of English verse a series of syllables which seems to fit any of these, he thinks he has proved something. A more detailed review, which brings out many other faults in this absurd book, may be found in *Modern Language Notes*, XXXV, 122-26.

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Un Point du Vue Français sur le But de la Modern Humanities Research Association: The Presidential Address for 1919-20.
By GUSTAVE LANSON. [Cambridge: Printed at the University Press.] Pp. 15.

In a recently issued prospectus the Modern Humanities Research Association, founded at Cambridge, England, in 1918, announces as its main object "the encouragement of advanced study in Modern Languages and Literatures by co-operation, through correspondence, personal intercourse,